



DATE: July 27, 2021

TO: Executive Directors, Regional Councils of Governments (COGs)

SUBJECT: Request for Proposals for FY 2021 Water Quality Planning Grant Funding under Clean Water Act Sections 205(j)/604(b)

Announcement

Pursuant to Section 205(j)/604(b) of the Clean Water Act, the Division of Water Resources is seeking proposals for water quality planning projects using federal fiscal year 2021 grant funds. As stated in Section 205(j) of the Act, grant funds are to be awarded to Regional Commissions and Councils of Governments "to carry out water quality management planning, including, but not limited to:

- A. Identifying most cost effective and locally acceptable facility and non-point source measures to meet and maintain water quality standards;
- B. Developing an implementation plan to obtain state and local financial and regulatory commitments to implement measures developed under (A); and
- C. Determining the nature, extent, and cause of water quality problems in various areas of the state."

For the 2021 federal fiscal year, North Carolina has approximately \$150,000 to award for water quality planning projects.

Division Planning staff encourages the following types of projects in particular:

- Development of 9-Element watershed restoration plans for 12-digit HUC or smaller watersheds (please see the new information below and refer to resources for developing watershed plans on the [319 grant program website](#))
- Water quality planning projects with concrete outputs such as (green and/or gray) stormwater infrastructure mapping, prioritization or design
- Projects that benefit water quality regionally or statewide
- Projects to share water quality planning knowledge between COGs and their member governments
- **New:** Source identification studies, including water quality monitoring, field assessments, modeling, and GIS analyses to support watershed plan development



New 9-Element Plan Procedure

To better assist grantees in the completion of a DWR-approved 9-Element Watershed Restoration Plan within the project period, each 205(j)-funded 9-Element Plan project will now be assigned a DWR support staff member at the onset of the project period to advise and answer questions. Your DWR support staff member will be available to meet at least once per quarter and will serve as the primary reviewer for the plan. A draft plan should be submitted to the plan reviewer by the first day of the final quarter of the project period. The reviewer will have a month to provide comments, and the project team will have the remainder of the final quarter to address any concerns and re-submit the plan for approval. *Please account for this new procedure in the milestone schedule in the application.*

How to Apply

Download the application from the Division's [205j Grant Program Website](#). Submit the completed application to kelsey.rowland@ncdenr.gov with "[Your COG's name] 205(j) Grant Proposal" in the subject line by **Friday, September 10th, 2021**. **Please submit application as a Word document** to enable reviewers to comment easily (any signed letters of support may be scanned and included as a separate attachments).

Proposals will be reviewed based on the evaluation criteria found on the [205\(j\) program website](#). Note that Division staff may request more information or modifications of selected projects prior to development of a contract. As a reminder, billable work may not begin until contracts are fully executed, and proposed projects should conclude no later than June 30, 2023.

Schedule

2021 205j Timetable for Grant Applicants	
Tuesday, July 27, 2021	205(j) grant RFP opens
Friday, September 10, 2021	Deadline for proposals; must be received electronically by midnight
Wednesday, September 29, 2021	Applicants will receive review team's questions about their proposals
Wednesday, October 6, 2021	Deadline for applicants to answer review team's questions
Monday, October 25, 2021	Applicants notified if selected for funding. Move forward with contracting.
Friday, October 29, 2021	Deadline for selected applicants to return completed contracting forms to 205(j) grant manager, to enable contracts to be developed on time.
Saturday, January 1, 2022	Contracts executed, projects may start. (Estimated depending on time for contract preparation.)

Proposals will be scored using review criteria based on their relevance to water quality, concrete outputs, and unique need (demonstration that this need is not being funded elsewhere).

Please do not hesitate to contact 205(j) grant administrator Kelsey Rowland at (919) 707-3679 or kelsey.rowland@ncdenr.gov with any questions or for additional guidance.

